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ABSTRACT

This publication provides a framework that is designed for use by state agencies as a guide for planning and conducting evaluation of different aspects of the State Adult Education Program. The evaluation framework is presented using a set of design tables that offer different approaches states can use to address the Adult Education Act's evaluation requirements. The tables present evaluation options for the following topic areas: program context, program processes (planning and content, curriculum, qualifications of personnel), and program outcomes. For each design and topic presented, the tables provide the evaluation topics, data to collect, methodology, instrumentation, strengths/advantages, and problems and limitations. The measures presented are illustrative of the data that can be collected for each type of evaluation. Within each area, the tables present data collection strategies for basic, enhanced, and optimal levels of evaluation. The levels of evaluation differ by the quality of data they produce, resources required to conduct them, and the type of program decisions they can inform. Following the tables are summaries of the data the evaluation can collect at each level and outlines of evaluation reports that could be produced for each level. (YLB)

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EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE STATE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Presented to:

NATIONAL MEETING OF STATE DIRECTORS
OF ADULT EDUCATION
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

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EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE STATE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

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EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
FOR THE STATE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Evaluation is becoming an increasingly important component of Adult Education programs. The Adult Education Act requires states to evaluate one-third of their grant recipients over four years in several areas. These areas include the planning and content of programs, curriculum and instructional materials, qualifications of personnel, program impact on standardized test scores and subsequent work experience of participants. Evaluation requirements also feature prominently in proposed revisions to the Federal adult education program pending in Congress. For example, the "Strengthening Education for American Families Act" (S. 2) would require states to evaluate local program success in student recruitment, retention and achievement of learning gains and literacy goals. Legislative amendments also require the development of quality indicators to measure the success of adult education programs. Performance indicators are also included in the President's education plan, America 2000.

Development of the Framework

To assist states in addressing these current and pending evaluation requirements, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) contracted with Pelavin Associates to develop this framework for evaluating the State Adult Education Program. The framework is designed for use by state agencies as a *guide* for planning and conducting evaluation of different aspects of the state program. It does not mandate a single methodology or set of measures. In addition, Pelavin Associates designed the framework:

- To address the topic areas required by the current legislation;
- To be flexible and useful to all states;
- To work within states' current evaluation structures by allowing use of data collection instruments states are currently using for program monitoring and evaluation; and
- To be adaptable to differences in state goals, resources and capabilities to conduct evaluation.

Pelavin Associates obtained input from state directors of adult education at two points during the development of the framework. The directors first provided input at workshops at the regional meetings of state directors held by the Department of Education between February and June 1991. Twelve state directors then reviewed a draft version of the framework in June 1991. In addition, several local directors and researchers of adult education programs reviewed the framework.

Approach to Evaluation

The approach to evaluation adopted in the framework assumes that the adult education program is a system of component parts -- context, program processes and students -- that interact to produce measurable outcomes. The purpose of evaluation is to describe this system and determine whether it works effectively. More specifically, an evaluation should:

- Provide a systematic description of each of the major components of the adult education program;
- Develop key indicators of the components of adult education programs, with emphasis on program outcomes;
- Provide the basis for performance standards for the adult education programs based on key indicators.

To achieve these purposes, an evaluation will include both quantitative measures that provide summary measures of the program and qualitative measures that provide more detail about specific aspects of the program. These measures should be developed for both program processes and program outcomes, including participant impact.

The framework standardizes state evaluations by focusing on common components of evaluation, rather than on each state's specific goals and objectives. The framework allows states to examine the same topics using one of several standard methodologies. This standardization is essential for allowing an assessment of the adult education program nationally. However, states will also want to conduct an evaluation of their own goals specified in their state plans. States may use the same techniques of the framework to evaluate these unique programmatic goals.

Evaluation Design Tables

The evaluation framework is presented using a set of design tables that offer different approaches states can use to address the Adult Education Act's evaluation requirements. The tables present options that will provide useful data at different levels of effort and cost. The evaluations will not only meet legislative requirements, but will provide information that will assist states in developing more effective, higher quality programs.

The tables present evaluation options for program context, program processes -- planning and content, curriculum, qualifications of personnel -- and program outcomes. For each design and topic presented, the tables provide the evaluation topics, data to collect, methodology, instrumentation, and problems and limitations. The measures presented are illustrative of the data that can be collected for each type of evaluation. It is not necessary for states to collect all of the data elements listed in the tables to conduct the evaluation.

Levels of Evaluation. For each topic, three levels of evaluation are presented. The levels of evaluation differ by the quality of data they produce, resources required to conduct them and the type of program decisions they can inform.

> Basic Evaluation - produces the minimal data needed for basic assessment. When evaluating program processes, this level of evaluation can often be conducted using existing data sources, such as monitoring instruments, and requires little or no primary data collection. It can normally be conducted at low cost, depending on the information the state has available. For program outcome evaluations, this level involves aggregate test and outcome data from a sample of programs and participants.

Enhanced Evaluation - is a more rigorous and comprehensive evaluation design that provides greater description and analysis of program components and outcomes. For program process evaluation, this level requires primary data collection, such as mail or phone surveys of project staff and/or participants -- either in addition to or in lieu of existing data. When evaluating program outcomes, additional data such as attendance or employment records may supplement outcome measures to provide richer interpretation.

Optimal Evaluation - uses the most rigorous methodology and produces the highest quality data. This type of evaluation attempts to uncover relationships between program processes, types of participants and outcomes. However, it may be very costly and beyond the resources or capacity of many states. These evaluations would be conducted only periodically and would usually require special project funds.

The higher level evaluations may obtain the same data as the lower level evaluations (e.g., optimal design strategies can also obtain the same data as the basic strategy). They go beyond the basic level evaluation, however, by allowing for examination of particular subgroups of participants, different types of programs and (for optimal evaluations) subcomponents and groups within the same program. For example, an enhanced design could examine impacts of programs serving the homeless as compared to the general population. An optimal design could examine whether a program helped participants achieve a personal goal of improving their employment situation compared to achievement of other types of goals of other participants.

Outcome and process tables. The program outcome tables differ from the other tables since there are fundamental differences between outcomes, processes and context that affect evaluation design. Outcome studies may use the individual student as the unit of analysis, while process and context studies examine program level variables. In addition, student outcome measures (standardized tests, employment) are more clearly defined than process measures. Finally, states examine program process and content regularly through onsite monitoring and other oversight. Few states, however, have systematic access to student outcome measures and many local programs do not have this information in the standardized and accessible form needed for evaluation.

Due to the these differences, the tables presenting program process evaluation focus on the different types of information that the three levels of evaluation can produce while the program outcome tables present different analytic methods and other data sources that can be used to enhance the quality of the outcome measures.

Using the tables. States have different levels of knowledge and resources to devote to evaluation. The tables offer a menu of topics and methodologies from which states can choose, depending on their interest and resources available for evaluation. For example, the framework allows states to do everything at once, to do everything sequentially, or to examine some topics in depth and others not at all. This approach allows the state maximum flexibility in deciding which topics to examine and at what depth.

The basic evaluation will provide the state with the minimal data required by OVAE. However, there are considerable advantages to a state to conduct the higher levels of evaluation.

The enhanced and optimal levels provide detailed information about how the program is functioning, who it is serving and the type of participants benefitting most from instruction. These data are useful both to demonstrate program effectiveness to legislators, governors, other program funders and to the general public. The data will also point to areas needing improvement, assist in program planning and identify technical assistance needs of local programs.

To use the tables a researcher must make several decisions. The first decision is the type of information wanted. This decision will involve formulation of research questions that will meet program needs for assessment and improvement.

After the topics have been decided, the resources available to conduct the evaluation -- time, funds and staff -- will influence the approach. Research questions and study resources in turn affect the methodology the study must take. Such issues as sampling, aggregation of data, level of measurement, validity and response rates must be considered. The informed researcher can then use the tables to help select the approach that will best address the state's evaluation needs.

The frequency with which to conduct the evaluation presents yet another decision. Depending on the state's needs, the evaluation may be done only once over the four-year period to present a cross-sectional picture of the adult education program or it may require multiple data collections sequentially over the grant period. A third option is to establish a regular, ongoing system to monitor progress and outcomes of individual programs. This approach could involve the establishment of performance standards.

Performance Standards

While the tables do not include performance standards, such standards can be developed easily from the indicators generated by the evaluation. The state must first select which indicators it wants to use as standards, obtain baseline data for the indicators and then establish a goal level for each indicator. The standards could be developed based on evaluation findings and in consultation with local programs. Once the standards are established the state would need to develop an ongoing process for obtaining data on the standard from local programs.

For example, the state may want to improve the qualifications of instructors of adult education and decide to use the percentage of instructors credentialed to teach adult education as the indicator. If the state currently has 40 percent of instructors with this credential, it may decide to raise this percentage to 80 percent within four years, increasing ten percent each year. The state would then implement a procedure for collecting data annually from each program on the percentage of staff with this credential.

As with an evaluation study, the data collection method for performance standards could be at the basic, enhanced or optimal level. The basic level would provide gross measures of standards for programs or participants. The enhanced and optimal levels would provide more information that would allow for greater potential for differentiation among individual programs or participants with various characteristics. This additional information would allow for the establishment of separate standards for different types of programs or populations. For example, different standards could be set for programs that serve incarcerated or institutionalized individuals. Likewise, standardized test score standards could be established for some categories

of participants (e.g., adult education students whose initial test scores are above third grade level) but not for others (non-English speaking students).

Overview of materials. The following evaluation design tables are organized by topic areas: program context, program processes and outcomes. Within each area, the tables present data collection strategies for basic, enhanced and optimal levels of evaluation. Following the tables are summaries of the data the evaluation can collect at each level and outlines of evaluation reports that could be produced for each level.

The outlines are presented only as examples of the data that could be reported for each topic area and level of evaluation. These are suggested -- not required -- indicators. For example, if a state chooses to implement an enhanced evaluation, it does not need to collect data on every indicator included in the outline of an enhanced evaluation report. Instead, the state may choose the indicators it wishes from the list. Likewise, a state may add its own indicators of other aspects of the program to the list when conducting its evaluation.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Context	Organization/ Structure of State Adult Education System	State Records of Program Grantees Annual Performance Reports Prepared by Each Program	Aggregate/Analyze Data from Program Record Files Aggregate/Analyze Data from Annual Performance Reports	Program Organizational Context and Delivery System Number of Projects Number of Projects in Different Institutional Settings Funding Levels of Different Projects Location of Projects (Urban, Suburban, Rural, Geographic Distribution) Number of Participants Served in Different Settings Characteristics of Participants Served in Different Settings Number and Characteristics of Participants Served in Different Settings	Provides General Picture of the Structure of the State Program	Programs Provide Aggregate Data on Number and Characteristics of Participants: Accuracy of Data May Be Difficult to Validate

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Context	Participants in the State Adult Education Program	Annual Performance Reports Prepared by Each Program	Aggregate/Analyze Data from Annual Performance Reports	Number of Program Participants Served in Different Settings Characteristics of Program Participants in Different Settings Number (and Percent) of Different Types of Educationally Disadvantatged Adults in Different Projects and Settings Goals of Program Participants Trends in Student Participation	Gives Total Participant Numbers for Different Settings and Programs	Program Records May Not Contain All Relevant Data on Participant Characteristics Programs Provide Aggregate Data on Number and Characteristics of Participants: Accuracy of Data May Be Difficult to Validate No Analysis of the Relationship between Participants' Goals and Participant Characteristics

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			<u>Enhanced Collection</u>			
Program Context	Participants in the State Adult Education Program	Annual Performance Reports Prepared by Each Program Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program	Collect Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals from State Representative Sample of Program Participants from Universe of Programs Aggregate/ Analyze Data from Annual Performance Reports	Number of Program Participants Served in Different Settings Characteristics of Program Participants in Different Settings Number (and Percent) of Different Types of Educationally Disadvantatged Adults in Different Projects and Settings Goals of Program Participants Trends in Student Participation	Allows Examination of Goals and Characteristics for a Sample of Participants	Programs Provide Aggregate Data on Number and Characteristics of Participants: Accuracy of Data May Be Difficult to Validate No Analysis of the Relationship between Participants' Goals and Participant Characteristics at Each Program (Samples are Too Small)

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			<u>Optimal Collection</u>			
Program Context	Participants in the State Adult Education Program	Annual Performance Reports Prepared by Each Program Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program	Collect Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals from Universe of Participants in All Programs Aggregate/ Analyze Data from Annual Performance Reports	Number of Program Participants Served in Different Settings Characteristics of Program Participants in Different Settings Number (and Percent) of Different Types of Educationally Disadvantatged Adults in Different Projects and Settings Enrollment and Attendance of Participants in Different Projects and Settings Goals of Program Participants Trends in Student Participation	Obtains Individual Data on Student Goals and Characteristics for all Participants	Requires an Individualized Student Record System with Data on Background Characteristics and Program Goals

PROGRAM PROCESS

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Planning and Content	Type of local planning process Community input in plan development Type of needs assessment process Type of program feedback or evaluation mechanisms Local goals include state goals Interagency coordination included in plan Student intake, recruitment and retention methods Client tracking, assessment, and flow	Checklist or abstraction form for reviewing provider proposals or monitoring reports Mail survey	Review proposals or reports Mail survey of a sample of programs	Steps involved in planning process Type of community input (hearings, advisory board) Agencies and groups represented on advisory committee Sources and analyses used in needs assessment Local state goals and objectives met Type and frequency of ongoing feedback from programs Agencies coordinating with program and coordination mechanisms Recruitment methods and targeted groups Procedures used for intake, assessment, tracking and followup	Provides descriptive information on planning process, recruitment methods, and intake and tracking process for all programs	Written sources may not contain complete information Little information of actual role of each in factor in planning process Limited descriptive information May not obtain information on all programs

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS (Continued)

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
Enhanced Collection						
Program Planning and Content	Key decisionmakers involved in planning Awareness of staff of program goals Representativeness of advisory group members and general public involved in planning Use of program feedback mechanisms Ongoing assessment methods used Staff understanding of recruitment, retention, tracking and followup procedures Program philosophy guiding program development	Questionnaire for staff and planning personnel	Telephone or mail survey of program staff and advisory group members	Identification of key planning decisionmakers Description of decision-making process Staff knowledge of program objectives and goals Existence of written program procedural manuals, and goals Nature of public and advisory group input and how input is used Memberships of relevant community groups on advisory board Methods for incorporating program feedback Rationale for recruitment and retention procedures and for tracking and flow design Types of assessment methods	Examines how planning process operates and local rationale for program design	Difficult to capture dynamics of planning process on survey Program with poor planning may be nonresponsive

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS (Continued)

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Optimal Collection			
Program Planning and Content	Success of program goals and objectives in reflecting local needs Level of involvement in planning process of outside agencies and community Success of coordination efforts Success of student retention and recruitment efforts Success of student tracking and followup methods	Staff and student interview Community leader interview Review form for advisory committee meetings and other documentation Onsite observation checklist	Interviews with staff and community leaders Student interviewing Onsite program observation Link with student data	Perception by staff and community of program's success in meeting community needs Type of input provided to planners by each participant in planning process Detail of planning process Flow and use of program feedback Level of involvement by coordinating agencies Targeted populations recruited Adequacy of tracking system Student assessment of program components Frequency and type of contact with program drop-outs Strengths and problems with recruitment, tracking and retention systems	Allows assessment of planning process in meeting community needs and adequacy of recruitment, tracking, and retention methods	Difficult to define criteria for successful efforts Difficult to reconstruct planning decisions and processes

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topics	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Limitations/ Problems
			Basic Collection			
Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Equipment	Content of Instruction Scope and sequence of basic skills Type of curricula Method of instruction Type of materials and equipment available Method of deciding on curricula and equipment needs Training given to instructors on use of materials and curricula Existence of quality control of instruction	Monitoring reports and/or mail survey	Compile information from existing monitoring reports or conduct a mail survey of sample of programs	Topics and subjects of instruction Basic skills taught Nature and names of curricula used, if any Instructional methods being used (e. g., group, individual, computer-assisted) Instructional strategies in use (e.g., lecture, guided study, question-answer) Types of equipment available and used in the classroom Input of instructors and teachers in curricula and materials needed Method of training instructors in curricula use Method, frequency of oversight, if any	Describes instructional approach of local programs	Descriptive information only No verification of frequency or consistency of use May not obtain information from all programs May be of questionable validity if self-response from programs

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS (Continued)

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topics	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Limitations/ Problems
			Enhanced Collection			
Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Equipment	Use of curricula Whether instruction follows an organized sequence of skills Use of instructional techniques that follow principles of adult learning Materials and equipment available Equipment and materials used according to prescribed sequence of basic skills	Onsite review instrument and staff interview guide	Observe classroom and instruction and interview staff as part of onsite monitoring or visit a sample of programs	Verify actual use of curricula and materials Review materials for scope and sequence of skill instruction Inspect condition of equipment Review lesson plans and methods for tailoring instruction to student goals	Examines how instructional methods and equipment are used by local programs	Criteria must be developed for judging curricula and instructional methods Onsite reviewers must be trained to standardize judgement Observation may interfere or change normal behavior of instructors and students

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS (Continued)

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topics	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Limitations/ Problems
			Optimal Collection			
Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Equipment	Curricula and basic skills instruction tied to student goals Tailoring and flexibility of instruction to meet student learning styles Student use of materials and equipment Relationship of curricula to retention, attendance, program completion and outcomes	Personal or telephone interviews with students and instructors Link with student data	Sample programs and collect data onsite or obtain student phone numbers for telephone interviews	Method for determining student goals and interests Ways instructors work with students to implement instruction and assess progress (e.g., tests, portfolios) How instruction is tied to student outcomes Student opportunities to obtain personal assistance Student use of personal assistance opportunities and materials	Assesses whether instructional approach is meeting student needs	Costly and time-consuming Hard to track students and obtain cooperation, especially if they already left program Bias to make program look good will exist for instructors -- may feel evaluators are "checking-up" on them

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Qualifications of Staff and Personnel	Whether staff are full time Staff turnover Adult education experience and training Professionalization of staff Recruitment and training Compensation of staff	Extraction form for reviewing monitoring reports and program personnel files Mail survey	Review existing reports and program personnel files and/or mail survey of a sample of programs	Number of full- and part-time instructors and support staff Length of time instructors stay with program Degrees, credentials of staff Prior experience of staff in adult education Number of volunteers Staff recruitment methods Type of preservice and ongoing training required by program Staff salaries	Gives overall picture of staff	Records may be out of date May not obtain information from all programs as response rate may be low

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			<u>Enhanced Collection</u>			
Qualifications of Staff and Personnel	Staff roles and responsibilities Mode and frequency of interaction with students Philosophy and approach toward adult learners Utilization of training resources Application of training Staff training and resource needs Staff evaluation of program training component Staff special skills and knowledge of community resources	Staff survey form	Mail or phone survey of program staff	Duties of staff members (instruction, counseling, case management) Percentage of staff time devoted to instruction Special qualities, skills of instructors Staff knowledge of other community education resources and supportive services Amount and type of training taken List of training and resource needs Positive and negative aspects of training	Assesses staff duties, knowledge and staff development needs	Positive response bias Difficult to assess reasons for non-response

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Optimal Collection			
Qualifications of Staff and Personnel	Adequacy of staff for meeting student needs Effectiveness of staff training in meeting staff needs Use of staff in positions commensurate with their training and experience Relationship of staff characteristics to student outcomes Morale of staff	Student questionnaire Staff questionnaire Classroom observation checklist	Onsite observation and interviews with staff and students Link with student data	Student perception of staff qualifications Student ratings of instructor performance Student use of program support services Instructor characteristics related to student retention, attendance and progress Instructor ratings of training and identification of its strengths and weaknesses Assignment and performance of volunteer staff Organization of instruction (e.g., use of lesson plans) Application of training received by staff in the classroom	Allows for assessment of staff by students and observers Can relate instructor characteristics to student retention and progress Assesses effect of staff development activities	Students hard to locate Student may have positive bias to report well on instruction Instructor may be reluctant to criticize program

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Outcomes	Duration of Program Participation	Class Registers of Students Class Attendance Records	Aggregate Hours of Class Attendance for Each Program and for the State (Include Breakdowns for ABE, GED, and ESL) Aggregate Number of Participants in Each Program and the State	Aggregate Hours of Class Attendance Number of Program Participants in Each Program (Universe of Programs) Compute Average Number of Hours of Participation for Each Program Participant (by Program and for the State)	Provides Aggregate Data For State	Only Average Number of Hours of Attendance Can be Computed No Analysis of Distributions in the Number of Hours of Program Attendance No Analysis of Participation Rates for Subgroups in the Population No Analysis of Relationship Between Goals of Participation and Duration of Participation No Analysis of Relationship Between Program Characteristics and Duration of Participation No Analysis of Relationship Between Duration of Participation and Changes in Educational Attainment

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Duration of Program Participation	Intake Interviews or Student Record Files (Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals) Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Create Computerized Student Record Files by Merging Data from Student Record Files with Data from Attendance Records for State Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Programs	Hours of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Program Organization and Characteristics Goals of Program Participants	Creates Individual Student Data File for State Sample; Allows Analysis by Program and Participant Characteristics	No Analysis of Project Outcomes No Analysis of Differences in Sample Population from Total Participant Population No Analysis of Individual Programs Requires Individual Student Record System

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Duration of Program Participation	Intake Interviews or Student Record Files (Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals) Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Create Computerized Student Record Files by Merging Data from Student Record Files with Data from Attendance Records for State Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Program; Sample of Participants at each Program is Sufficiently Large to Evaluate Individual Programs	Hours of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Goals of Program Participants Program Organization and Characteristics	Creates Individual Student Data File With Samples Large Enough to Make Inferences About Individual Programs; Allows Analysis by Program and Participant Characteristics	No Analysis of Differences in Sample Population from Total Participant Population Requires Individualized Student Record System May be More Cumbersome to Sample Participants than to Create Universe File

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Optimal Collection			
Program Outcomes	Duration of Program Participation	Intake Interviews or Student Record Files (Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals) Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Create Computerized Student Record Files by Merging Data from Student Record Files with Data from Attendance Records for Universe of Program Participants	Hours of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Goals of Program Participants Program Organization and Characteristics	Creates individual student data file for all students and programs	Requires Individualized Student Record System

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Outcomes	Personal and Social Goals Associated with Participation in Adult Education Programs Participation in Higher Levels of Education Participation in Job Training	Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program Follow-up Survey of State Representative Sample of Program Participants Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Conduct Surveys of Representative Sample of Program Participants 6 or 12 Months After Exit from Program	Goals of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Program Participants Educational Diplomas or Certificates Obtained After Exit From Program Institutions of Higher Education Enrolled In After Exit from Program Programs of Higher Education Enrolled in After Exit from Program Job Training Programs Enrolled in After Exit from Program Other Goals Attained Due to Program Participation Contribution of Program Participation to Entry into Higher Education, Job Training Program, and Attainment of Other Goals	Allows Assessment of Success of a Sample of Students at One Point After Program Participation	Problems Tracking Program Participants After Leaving Program Observation at Only One Point After Program Participation Attrition of Sample Due to Tracking Problems Mail Surveys: Respondents May Not Be Able to Read Survey Self-Reported Data May Not Be Valid Phone Survey or Interviews: High Costs and Potential Interviewer Bias Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Limitations	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Personal and Social Goals Associated with Participation in Adult Education Programs Participation in Higher Levels of Education Participation in Job Training	Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program Follow-up Survey of State Representative Sample of Program Participants Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Conduct Surveys of Representative Sample of Program Participants 6 AND 12 (or 18) Months After Exit from Program	Goals of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Program Participants Educational Diplomas or Certificates Obtained After Exit From Program Institutions of Higher Education Enrolled In After Exit from Program Programs of Higher Education Enrolled in After Exit from Program Job Training Programs Enrolled in After Exit from Program Other Goals Attained Due to Program Participation Contribution of Program Participation to Entry into Higher Education, Job Training Program, and Attainment of Other Goals	Allows Assessment of Success of a Sample of Students at Two Points in Time	Problems Tracking Program Participants After Leaving Program Attrition of Sample Due to Tracking Problems Mail Surveys: Respondents May Not Be Able to Read Survey Self-Reported Data May Not Be Valid Phone Survey or Interviews: High Costs and Potential Interviewer Bias Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Outcomes	Educational Gains on Standardized Tests	Standardized Test of Educational or Functional Skills: TABE, CASAS, ABLE, or Other Standardized Test	Pretest and Posttest of Program Participants Test State Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Programs	Pretest Scores and Single Posttest Score in One Subject or Selected Subjects (Reading, Mathematics, etc.) Grade equivalents, scale scores, NCE scores)	Provides Simple Gain Scores of a Sample of Participants	Only Simple Change Scores for the State Can be Reported No Analysis of Project Outcomes (Samples are Too Small) No Analysis of Changes in Attainment of Subgroups in the Population No Analysis of the Relationship between Participant Characteristics, Duration of Program Participation, Program Characteristics and Changes in Educational Attainment No Analysis of Differences in Sample that is Pretested AND Posttested from Participant Population Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Educational Gains on Standardized Tests	Standardized Test of Educational or Functional Skills: TABE, CASAS, ABLE, or Other Standardized Test Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals from Intake Interviews or Student Record Files Student Attendance Records Survey of Project Directors and/or Staff	Pretest and Posttest of Program Participants State Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Programs	Pretest Scores and Single Posttest Score in One Subject or Selected Subjects (Reading, Mathematics, etc.) (Grade equivalents, scale scores, NCE scores) Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Hours of Program Participation Program Organization and Characteristics	Allows for Analysis of Differences of Test Gains by Participant and Program Characteristics and Duration of Participation on a Sample of Participants	No Analysis of Individual Project Outcomes No Analysis of Differences in Sample that is Pretested AND Posttested from Participant Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Educational Gains on Standardized Tests	Standardized Test of Educational or Functional Skills: TABE, CASAS, ABLE, or Other Standardized Test Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals from Intake Interviews or Student Record Files Student Attendance Records Survey of Project Directors and/or Staff	Pretest and Posttest of Program Participants Test State Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Programs on a Sample of Participants Large Enough to Evaluate Individual Programs	Pretest Scores and Single Posttest Score in One Subject or Selected Subjects (Reading, Mathematics, etc.) (Grade equivalents, scale scores, NCE scores) Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Hours of Program Participation Program Organization and Characteristics	Allows for Analysis of Differences of Test Gains by Participants and Program Characteristics Using Samples Large Enough to Evaluate Individual Programs	No Analysis of Differences in Sample that is Pretested AND Posttested from Participant Population Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Educational Gains on Standardized Tests	Standardized Test of Educational or Functional Skills: TABE, CASAS, ABLE, or Other Standardized Test Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals from Intake Interviews or Student Record Files Student Attendance Records Survey of Project Directors and/or Staff	Pretest and Posttest of Program Participants Test All Participants in All Programs	Pretest Scores and Single Posttest Score in One Subject or Selected Subjects (Reading, Mathematics, etc.) (Grade equivalents, scale scores, NCE scores) Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Hours of Program Participation Program Organization and Characteristics	Provides Assessment of Test Gains on all Participants and Allows Analysis of Gains by Participant and Program Characteristics and Duration of Participation	Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program High Cost of Testing and Collecting Data on All Program Participants Requires an Individualized Student Record System with Data on Background Characteristics, Program Goals, and Hours of Program Attendance

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Optimal Collection			
Program Outcomes	Educational Gains on Standardized Tests	Standardized Test of Educational or Functional Skills: TABE, CASAS, ABLE, or Other Standardized Test Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals from Intake Interviews or Student Record Files Data on Characteristics of Individuals in Comparison or Control Group Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Pretest and Posttest of Program Participants and Individuals in Comparison Group Test State Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Programs (Sample of Participants at each Program is Sufficiently Large to Evaluate Individual Programs) Test Comparison Group Members Matched with Program Participants at Each Program	Pretest Scores and Single Posttest Scores in One Subject or Selected Subjects Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Project Participants Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Comparison/Control Group Members Hours of Program Participation (of Participants) Program Organization and Characteristics	Randomized Design Allows for Causal Interpretations of Program Impact	Difficult to Assign Individuals Randomly to Participant and Control Groups Difficult to Develop a Matched Comparison Group High Cost of Random Assignment and Match Pairs Design

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Outcomes	Achievement of Skills and Competencies	Local tests assessing achievements of skill levels	Pretest program participants and posttest after prescribed number of hours of instruction Test state representative sample of participants from universe of programs	Percentage of students moving to higher competency or attaining skill level	Provides statewide picture of percentage of participants improving competencies or skills	Only simple change scores can be reported for state as a whole No analyses of individual program outcomes No analysis of changes in skill attainment for population subgroups No analysis of relationship between participant characteristics, duration of participation, program characteristics, and changes in skill attainment No analysis of differences in sample that is pretested and posttested for participant population May be lack of standardization across programs in definition of skill levels

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Achievement of Skills or Competencies	Local Tests Assessing Achievement of Skill Levels Data on Participant Characteristics and Goals Student Attendance Records Survey of Project Directors and Staff	Pretest Program Participants and Posttest after Prescribed Number of Hours of Instruction Test Representative Sample of Participants from Universe of Programs With Sample Large Enough to Make Inferences About Individual Program; Alternatively, Test All Participants	Percentage of Students Moving to a Higher Compentency or Attaining Skill Level	Allows for Analysis of Skills Attainment by Duration of Participation, participant and Program Characteristics Able to Assess Individual Programs	Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program High Cost of Testing a Large Number of Participants If Sample Used, Cannot Analyze Differences Between Sample and Total Populations If all Participants

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/Limitations
			Basic Collection			
Program Outcomes	Work Experience of Participants, Completers, and Graduates	Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program Follow-up Survey of State Representative Sample of Program Participants	Conduct Surveys of Representative Sample of Program Participants upon Program Completion and 6, 12 and 18 Months After Exit from Program	Goals of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Program Participants Employment Status of Participants Upon Entry and After Exit From Program Type of Employment Before and After Program Participation Earnings Before and After Program Participation Public Assistance Status Before and After Program Participation Change in Employment Status	Provides data of program impact on work experience for a sample of participants	Employment May Not Be a Goal of Program Participation: Change in Employment Condition May Not Be Appropriate Outcome Measure for Some Participants Problems Tracking Program Participants After Leaving Program Attrition of Sample Due to Tracking Problems Mail Surveys: Respondents May Not Be Able to Read Survey Self-Reported Data May Not Be Valid Phone Survey or Interviews: High Costs and Potential Interviewer Bias Results Do Not Indicate How Students Would Have Done Without the Program

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Enhanced Collection			
Program Outcomes	Work Experience of Participants, Completers, and Graduates	Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program Follow-up Survey of State Representative Sample of Program Participants Individual Record Data from Department of Employment Individual Record Data from Department of Social Services Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Conduct Surveys of Representative Sample of Program Participants 6 or 12 Months After Exit from Program Merge Individual Student Record Data from Adult Education Program with Record Data from Departments of Employment and Social Services (Using Social Security Number of Other Student Identification Number)	Goals of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Program Participants Employment Status of Participants Upon Entry and After Exit From Program Type of Employment Before and After Program Participation Earnings Before and After Program Participation Public Assistance Status Before and After Program Participation Change in Employment Status Hours of Program Participation Program Organization and Characteristics	Uses Employment Records to Assess Impact of Program on Work Experience for a Sample of Participants	Employment May Not Be a Goal of Program Participation: Change in Employment Condition May Not Be Appropriate Outcome Measure for Some Participants Problems Tracking Program Participants After Leaving Program Attrition of Sample Due to Tracking Problems Mail Surveys: Respondents May Not Be Able to Read Survey Self-Reported Data May Not Be Valid Phone Survey or Interviews: High Costs and Potential Interviewer Bias Requires Computerized Individual Student Record System Confidentiality Issue

ADULT EDUCATION EVALUATION OPTIONS

Component of Evaluation	Evaluation Topic	Data Collection Instrument	Methodology	Data/Information Collected	Strengths/ Advantages	Problems/ Limitations
			Optimal Collection			
Program Outcomes	Work Experience of Participants, Completers, and Graduates	Intake Interviews or Student Record Data Obtained at Entry into Program Follow-up Survey of State Representative Sample of Program Participants Individual Record Data from Department of Employment Individual Record Data from Department of Social Services Student Attendance Records Surveys of Project Directors and/or Staff	Conduct Surveys of Representative Sample of Program Participants 6 AND or 12 (or 18) Months After Exit from Program Merge Individual Student Record Data from Adult Education Program with Record Data from Departments of Employment and Social Services (Using Social Security Number of Other Student Identification Number)	Goals of Program Participation Demographic and Socioeconomic Data on Program Participants Employment Status of Participants Upon Entry and After Exit From Program Type of Employment Before and After Program Participation Earnings Before and After Program Participation Public Assistance Status Before and After Program Participation Change in Employment Status Hours of Program Participation Program Organization and Characteristics	Provides Assessment of Program Impact on Work Experience at Two Points in Time for a Sample of Participants Using Employment Records	Employment May Not Be a Goal of Program Participation: Change in Employment Condition May Not Be Appropriate Outcome Measure for Some Participants Problems Tracking Program Participants After Leaving Program Attrition of Sample Due to Tracking Problems Mail Surveys: Respondents May Not Be Able to Read Survey Self-Reported Data May Not Be Valid Phone Survey or Interviews: High Costs and Potential Interviewer Bias Requires Computerized Individual Student Record System Confidentiality Issue

SUMMARIES AND SAMPLE REPORT OUTLINES

BASIC EVALUATION SUMMARY

Program Context

Topics: Organization and Structure of Adult Education System
Participants in Program

Methods: Aggregate data from program record files and the Annual Performance Report

Strengths: Provides general picture of state structure and participation levels

Limitations: Only aggregate data are provided; validity may be low; all participants may not be included

Program Planning and Content

Topics: Type of Local Planning Process
Type of Community Input
Feedback and Needs Assessment Mechanisms
Local Programmatic Goals
Coordination Activities
Description of Program Recruitment, Intake and Tracking

Methods: Abstract data from program proposals and monitoring reports

Strengths: Provides descriptive information on planning process, recruitment and program components

Limitations: Existing information may be limited and incomplete; no understanding of role in each factor in planning; only description of client flow

Curriculum, Instructional Material and Equipment

Topics: Type of Curricula
Content and Methods of Instruction
Scope and Sequence of Basic Skills Instruction
Type of Materials and Equipment Available
Description of Instructor Training on Use of Materials and Curricula
Type of Instruction Quality Control

Methods: Abstract data from monitoring reports and/or mail survey

Strengths: Describes instructional approach of local programs

Limitations: Descriptive information only; no verification of frequency or consistency of use of materials and curriculum

Qualifications of Program Staff

Topics: Number of fulltime and parttime staff
Staff Turnover
Staff Qualifications and Credentials
Staff Recruitment and Training
Staff Qualifications
Staff Compensation

Methods: Extract data from monitoring reports and program personnel files

Strengths: Provides overall picture of staff

Limitations: Records and reports may be outdated and incomplete

Program Outcomes

Topics: Duration of Participation
Gains on Standardized Tests
Personal Goal Attainment
Participation in Higher Level of Education
Participation in Job Training
Attainment of Skills and Competencies
Subsequent Work Experience

Methods: Classroom records, standardized test scores, skill level scores, student intake interviews, follow-up surveys of sample of participants, project staff interviews, data from Departments of Employment and Social Services

Strengths: Provides aggregate totals for state based on representative samples

Limitations: Only mean attendance hours computed; no distribution or subgroup analyses; no analysis of relationship between participation and student goals attainment; No analysis of individual project outcomes; no comparison group; self reported data; hard to locate participants; change in employment may not be related to program

EXAMPLE OF STATE EVALUATION REPORT

BASIC COLLECTION

I. Program Context

A. Need for Program Services (Needs Assessment from 4-Year Plan)

1. Census Data
2. Special Surveys of Incidence of Special Populations

B. Organization/Structure of the State Adult Education System

1. Number of Projects
2. Number of Projects in Different Institutional Settings
3. Location of Projects (Urban, Suburban, Rural)
4. Number of Participants Served in Different Settings
5. Types of Projects (ABE, GED, ESL)

C. Participants in the State Adult Education Program

1. Number of Program Participants Served in Different Settings
2. Characteristics of Program Participants Statewide
3. Aggregate Number and Characteristics of Participants in Different Types of Projects
4. Number of Different Types of Educationally Disadvantaged Adults Statewide
5. Statewide Goals of Program Participants

II. Program Process and Content

A. Program Planning and Content

1. Type of Local Planning Process
2. State Goals Included Locally
3. Interagency Coordination Included in Plan
4. Recruitment Activities
5. Student Tracking, Assessment, and Flow Procedures

B. Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Equipment

1. Existence of a Curricula or Organized Sequence of Instruction
2. Type of Materials and Equipment Available
3. Local Method for Deciding Curricula and Equipment Needs
4. Training Given to Instructors on Use of Materials and Curriculum

C. Qualifications of Personnel

1. Number of Full- and Parttime Staff
2. Staff Turnover

3. Instructor Experience and Training in Adult Education

III. Program Outcomes

A. Retention in Program (Duration of Program Participation)

1. Aggregate Number of Full- and Parttime Hours of Attendance (State, Programs, Components)
2. Total Number of Participants by Program
3. Aggregate Average Hours of Full and Parttime Participation by Program and statewide

B. Educational Gains on Standardized Tests

1. Average Gains in Attainment (Test Scores, Grade Levels) for State

C. Work Experience of Participants, Completers and Graduates

1. Change in Employment Status Before and After Program Participation
2. Change in Type of Employment Before and After Program Participation
3. Change in Public Assistance Status Before and After Program Participation

D. Personal and Social Gains Associated with Program Participation, Participation in Higher Education, Advanced Vocational Education, and Job Training

1. Number and Percent Who Attained Personal and Social Goals
2. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals

E. Skill or Competency Attainment

1. Number of Participants Moving to Higher Levels of Competency or Attaining Specific Skill Level

ENHANCED EVALUATION SUMMARY

Program Context

Topics:	Characteristics and Distribution of Participants in Programs
Methods:	Intake interviews or student record data and Annual Performance Report data from a representative sample of participants
Strengths:	Allows examination of goals and characteristics for a sample of participants
Limitations:	No analysis of individual program data due to small sample sizes; only aggregate data are provided; validity may be low

Program Planning and Content

Topics:	Identity of Key Planning Decisionmakers Staff Awareness of Program Mission and Goals Community Representativeness of Advisory Board Use of Program Feedback Mechanisms Use of Ongoing Participant Assessment and Tracking Staff Understanding of Program Components Program Philosophy Guiding Participant Flow
Methods:	Phone or mail survey of staff and advisory board members
Strengths:	Examines how planning process operates and local rationale for program design
Limitations:	Nonresponse rate may be high, especially among programs with poor planning; planning dynamics hard to capture on survey

Curriculum, Instructional Material and Equipment

Topics:	Use of Curricula and Materials Whether Instructional Methods Follow Organized Sequence of Skills Availability of Materials and Equipment Use of Materials and Equipment According to a Prescribed Skill Sequence
Methods:	Interview staff and conduct site visits to programs
Strengths:	Examines how instructional methods and equipment are used by local programs
Limitations:	Must develop criteria for judging curricula and instructional methods among reviewers; observation may bias instructors' behavior

Qualifications of Program Staff

Topics: Staff Roles and Responsibilities
Interaction with Students
Approach Toward Adult Learners
Staff Training and Resource Needs
Staff Utilization and Evaluation of Training

Methods: Mail or phone survey of staff

Strengths: Assesses staff duties, knowledge and staff development needs

Limitations: Difficult to asses reasons for nonresponse; positive response bias by instructors to make program look good

Program Outcomes

Topics: Duration of Participation
Gains on Standardized Tests
Personal Goal Attainment
Participation in Higher Level of Education
Participation in Job Training
Skill and Competency Attainment
Subsequent Work Experience

Methods: Create computerized data files of student records, attendance and student intake interviews for sample of participants by program; merge Departments of Employment and Social Services data with student database; pre- and posttest all participants (or a large enough sample to assess individual programs); conduct 6 and 12 month followup of students; interview program staff

Strengths: Allows assessment of students in individual programs; allows examination of participant outcomes by characteristics of programs and participants

Limitations: Requires individual student record system; no comparison group; high cost of testing; no analysis due to differences in sample that is pretested and posttested from participant population; attrition and tracking problems

EXAMPLE OF STATE EVALUATION REPORT

ENHANCED COLLECTION

I. Program Context

A. Need for Program Services (Needs Assessment from 4-Year Plan)

1. Census Data
2. Special Surveys of Incidence of Special Populations
3. Studies of High School Dropouts
4. Labor Market Studies

B. Organization/Structure of the State Adult Education System

1. Number of Projects (and Satellite Locations)
2. Number of Projects in Different Institutional Settings
3. Location of Projects (Urban, Suburban, Rural)
4. Number of Participants Served in Different Settings
5. Characteristics of Participants Served in Different Settings
6. Types of Projects (ABE, GED, ESL)

C. Participants in the State Adult Education Program

1. Number of Program Participants Served in Different Settings
2. Characteristics of Program Participants Statewide
3. Number and Characteristics of Participants in Different Types of Projects
4. Number of Different Types of Educationally Disadvantaged Adults (in Different Projects and Settings)
5. State Trends in Student Participation
6. Goals of Program Participants

II. Program Process and Content

A. Program Planning and Content

1. Decisionmakers Involved in Planning Process
2. Awareness of Staff of Program Goals
3. Community Representativeness and Involvement in Planning
4. Use of Program Feedback Mechanisms
5. Student Assessment Methods Used
6. Staff Understanding of Program Flow
7. Program Philosophy Guiding Components

B. Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Equipment

1. Existence and Use of Curricula
2. Use of Organized Sequence of Basic Skills Instruction

3. Availability Materials and Equipment
4. Use of Materials and Equipment According to Prescribed Sequence of Skill Instruction

C. Qualifications of Personnel

1. Staff Roles, Responsibilities and Interaction with Students
2. Approach Toward Adult Learners
3. Use of Staff Training Resources
4. Staff Training and Resource Needs
5. Staff Evaluation of Program Training

III. Program Outcomes

A. Retention in Program (Duration of Program Participation)

1. Average Number of Hours of Attendance (State, Programs)
2. Distribution of Number of Hours of Program Attendance (State, Programs)
3. Participation Rates for Participants with Different Program Goals
4. Relationship between Goals of Participation and Duration of Participation
5. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Duration of Participation

B. Educational Gains on Standardized Tests

1. Average Gains in Attainment (State, Programs)
2. Distribution of Gains in Attainment (State, Programs)
3. Gains in Educational Attainment for Participants with Different Program Goals
5. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Gains in Educational Attainment
6. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Gains in Educational Attainment

C. Work Experience of Participants, Completers and Graduates

1. Change in Employment Status Before and After Program Participation
2. Change in Type of Employment Before and After Program Participation
3. Change in Earnings Before and After Program Participation
4. Change in Public Assistance Status Before and After Program Participation
5. Relationship between Goals of Participation and Changes in Employment Status, Type of Employment, Earnings, and Public Assistance Status
6. Relationship between Participant Characteristics and Changes in Employment Status

7. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Changes in Employment Status
8. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Changes in Employment Status

D. Personal and Social Gains Associated with Program Participation, Participation in Higher Education, Advanced Vocational Education, and Job Training

1. Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
2. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
3. Relationship between Participant Characteristics, Goals, and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
4. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
5. Effects of Participation on Attainment of Personal and Social Goals

E. Attainment of Skills and Competencies

1. Number and Percent Attaining Higher levels of Competencies and Skills for Individual Programs
2. Characteristics of Participants Attaining Higher Skills and Competencies
3. Program Characteristics Related to Skill Attainment

OPTIMAL EVALUATION SUMMARY

Program Context

Topics: Characteristics and Goals of Participants in Programs

Methods: Individual data on participant characteristics from all participants and programs

Strengths: Obtains individual data for all participants

Limitations: Requires individual student record system

Program Planning and Content

Topics: Success of Planning Process in Achieving Program Goals
Success of Program in Meeting Local Needs
Level of Involvement of Relevant Community Groups
Success of Coordination with Other Programs
Success of Retention and Recruitment Efforts
Success of Program Tracking and Retention Methods

Methods: Interviews with staff, students and community leaders; onsite program observation

Strengths: Allows assessment of planning process in meeting community needs and adequacy of program components

Limitations: Difficult to reconstruct planning process; difficult to define "success"

Curriculum, Instructional Materials and Equipment

Topics: Curricula tied to Student Goals
Flexibility of Instruction to Meet Student Needs
Student Use of Materials and Equipment
Relationship of Curriculum and Instructional Techniques to Program Completion and Outcomes

Methods: Interviews with students and instructors

Strengths: Assesses whether instructional approach is meeting participant needs

Limitations: Costly and time-consuming; Hard to track students; positive bias to make program look good

Qualifications of Program Staff

Topics: Adequacy of Staff to Meet Student Needs
Effectiveness of Staff Training in Meeting Staff Needs
Use of Staff in Positions Commensurate with their Training and Experience
Staff Morale
Relationship of Staff to Student Outcomes

Methods: Student and staff interviews; classroom observation

Limitations: Students hard to track; instructors may be reluctant to criticize program; students may have a positive response bias

Program Outcomes

Topics: Duration of Program Participation
Standardized Test Gains
Subsequent Work Experience
Achievement of Personal Goals
Attainment of Skills and Competencies

Methods: Create computerized data files of student records, participant demographic and socioeconomic data, attendance and student intake interviews for all participants; include Employment and Social Service Department data; obtain hours of participation, pre- and posttest scores from a sufficiently large sample to evaluate individual programs; link data with individual program characteristics; measure pre- and post-employment status and earnings and link with program characteristics; assess program effects on public assistance status; use a random or matched comparison group to assess gains due to program.

Strengths: Allows for causal assessment of program impact; creates individual data records linking program and participant characteristics, instruction and participant outcomes.

Limitations: Requires individual student record-keeping system; high cost; hard to track students after they leave the program; difficult to develop matched or random control group

EXAMPLE OF STATE EVALUATION REPORT

OPTIMAL COLLECTION

I. Program Context

A. Need for Program Services (Needs Assessment from 4-Year Plan)

1. Census Data
2. Special Surveys of Incidence of Special Populations
3. Studies of High School Dropouts
4. Labor Market Studies
5. National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) or Other State Survey

B. Organization/Structure of the State Adult Education System

1. Number of Projects (and Satellite Locations)
2. Number of Projects in Different Institutional Settings
3. Location of Projects (Urban, Suburban, Rural)
4. Number of Participants Served in Different Settings
5. Characteristics of Participants Served in Different Settings
6. Types of Projects (ABE, GED, ESL)

C. Participants in the State Adult Education Program

1. Number of Program Participants Served in Different Settings
2. Characteristics of Program Participants (by Program)
3. Number and Characteristics of Participants in Different Types of Projects
4. Number of Different Types of Educationally Disadvantaged Adults (in Different Projects and Settings)
5. Trends in Student Participation
6. Goals of Program Participants
7. Relationship between Participant Goals and Characteristics

II. Program Process and Content

A. Program Planning and Content

1. Success of Program Goals and Objectives in Reflecting Local Needs
2. Level of Involvement of Community in Plan Development
3. Success of Coordination Efforts
4. Success of Student Retention and Recruitment Efforts
5. Success of Tracking, Assessment and Flow Methods

B. Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Equipment

1. Curricula and Basic Skills Instruction Tied to Student Goals
2. Flexibility of Instruction to Meet Student Learning Styles

3. Student Use of Materials and Equipment
4. Relationship of Curriculum to Student Retention, Attendance, Completion and Outcomes

C. Qualifications of Personnel

1. Adequacy of Staff for Meeting Student Needs
2. Effectiveness of Staff Training in Meeting Program and Staff Needs
3. Use of Staff in Positions Commensurate with Their Training and Experience
4. Relationship of Staff Characteristics to Student Outcomes
5. Staff Morale

III. Program Outcomes

A. Retention in Program (Duration of Program Participation)

1. Average Number of Hours of Attendance (State, Programs, Components)
2. Distribution of Number of Hours of Program Attendance (State, Programs, Components)
3. Participation Rates for Subgroups in the Population
4. Participation Rates for Participants with Different Program Goals
5. Relationship between Goals of Participation and Duration of Participation
6. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Duration of Participation

B. Educational Gains on Standardized Tests

1. Average Gains in Attainment (State, Programs, Components)
2. Distribution of Gains in Attainment (State, Programs, Components)
3. Gains in Educational Attainment for Subgroups in the Population
4. Gains in Educational Attainment for Participants with Different Program Goals
5. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Gains in Educational Attainment
6. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Gains in Educational Attainment

C. Work Experience of Participants, Completers and Graduates

1. Change in Employment Status Before and After Program Participation
2. Change in Type of Employment Before and After Program Participation
3. Change in Earnings Before and After Program Participation
4. Change in Public Assistance Status Before and After Program Participation
5. Relationship between Goals of Participation and Changes in Employment Status, Type of Employment, Earnings, and Public Assistance Status
6. Relationship between Participant Characteristics and Changes in Employment Status
7. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Changes in Employment Status

8. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Changes in Employment Status
9. Effects of Participation on Changes in Employment Status

D. Personal and Social Gains Associated with Program Participation, Participation in Higher Education, Advanced Vocational Education, and Job Training

1. Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
2. Relationship between Duration of Participation and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
3. Relationship between Participant Characteristics, Goals, and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
4. Relationship between Program Characteristics and Attainment of Personal and Social Goals
5. Effects of Participation on Attainment of Personal and Social Goals

E. Attainment of Skills and Competencies

1. Number and Percent of Participants Achieving Higher Skill and Competency Levels by Program and Participant Characteristics